

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

April 19, 2012

The Honorable Eric K. Shinseki  
Secretary, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs  
810 Vermont Ave.,  
Washington, D.C. 20420

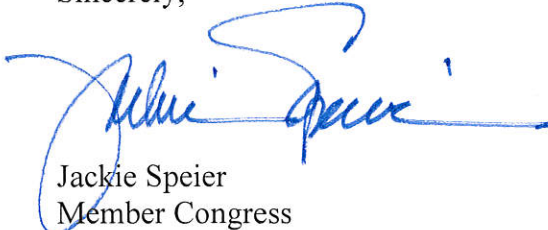
Dear Secretary Shinseki:

We are writing to express our extreme disappointment over the recent decision by your department not to include the Veteran Affairs' Oakland Regional Office among the 12 offices slated to receive "claims transformation initiatives" which will address severe claims backlog issues. The Oakland regional office serves veterans from Bakersfield to the Oregon border, and averages a 313 day wait for a decision on a claim. As of last Monday, the Oakland office has an entitlement backlog of 34,159 cases with 80.8 percent of these cases sitting without a rating for more than 125 days. This is the second worst percentage of backlogged claims older than 125 days in the nation. The Oakland office, crippled by its backlog, is forced to ship all new cases to VA offices in Nebraska and Oklahoma.

We have heard from our veteran constituents that they are often required to obtain multiple medical exams because the first exam is considered invalid due to the lengthy passage of time between the initial claim and the time the claim is ready to be rated. This is gross inefficiency and an unnecessary hardship on veterans and their families, some who may even become homeless while they wait for a claim decision from the Oakland office.

Please reconsider your decision not to select the Oakland regional office as one of the 12 to receive transformation initiatives, and send immediate help to the Oakland office so it may improve its processing of claims, erase this shameful backlog, and serve the veterans who so nobly served our country.

Sincerely,



Jackie Speier  
Member Congress



Jerry McNerney  
Member of Congress



Zoe Lofgren  
Member of Congress



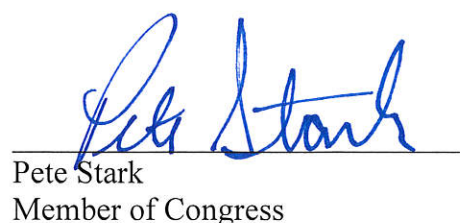
John Garamendi  
Member of Congress



Dennis Cardoza  
Member of Congress



Anna Eshoo  
Member of Congress



Pete Stark  
Member of Congress



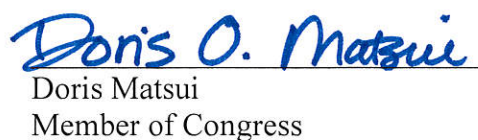
Jim Costa  
Member of Congress



Lois Capps  
Member of Congress



George Miller  
Member of Congress



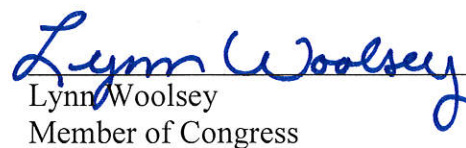
Doris O. Matsui  
Member of Congress



Mike Honda  
Member of Congress



Barbara Lee  
Member of Congress



Lynn Woolsey  
Member of Congress

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Sam Farr". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Sam" and last name "Farr" clearly distinguishable.

Sam Farr  
Member of Congress

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Mike Thompson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Mike" and last name "Thompson" clearly distinguishable.

Mike Thompson  
Member of Congress